

Expert review of Skyscanner by puC

Mark Wijkhuizen (s4659147)
Medard van Leeuwe (s4530608) Max Leijtens (s4548027)
Gijs Thuis (s4490444)

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Abstract

This is the Expert Review of the Skyscanner app, done by puC.

1 Introduction

For this report, we have chosen the Skyscanner app from the android Marketplace. We chose this app because some of our groupmembers were planning a flight for their upcoming holiday when they used found this app in the marketplace, just at the moment when we had to pick an app for this course.

In this report we are going to give a view of the Skyscanner app by means of different persona's that are going to use it. Then we are going to try and find out what points of improvement of this app are and whether or not there are catastrophic errors.

2 Persona's

We have chosen the following persona's because we expect these people to be the users of this application. The first because they don't have a lot of travel experience and want to book a holiday for his family cheap and easily. The old lady because we think that the app is especially useful for older people, since it allows them to cheaply book a holiday easily. We also added the poor student Charlie later on, because we use the app ourselves and expect other students like us with little money to want to go on a holiday cheaply.

Peter Pettigrew Peter is 35 years old. He is married and has two kids of 7 and 9 years old. He has booked plane-tickets before, but never via an app, only via websites. He has never used this app before. He can normally operate a computer, but is less familiar with an android device.

Minerva McGonagall Minerva is a 83 year old woman that wants to book a three month holiday to Cuba with her husband. She has some experience with a smartphone as taught to her by her grandchildren. Her eye-co-ordination isn't as optimal as it used to be, so a miss-click should be able to be undone easily. She doesn't want to lose all of her retirement savings on this trip since she wants her grandchildren to be able to inherit some money to help them through college

financially. Since she is not in her youngest days anymore she and her husband can't travel too far to the airport by car. Living in Amsterdam she wants to fly from Schiphol.

Charlie Weasley Charlie is a poor student, 21 years of age, in Romania who wants to go on a holiday with a friend. He has very little money to spend, but quite a lot of free time, especially during the summer-holiday. Therefore he wants to take a flight-trip through multiple countries, but have the trip be as cheap as possible. Since he has fear of flying, he wants to be seated next to the windows so he can see what is happening around the plane.

3 Heuristic Evaluation

3.1 Setup

3.1.1 Peter

Peter zoekt 4 vliegtickets naar zijn vakantie bestemming in Curaao, Jan Thiel op 7 juni; tot 13 juni. This evaluation is done by Medard.

3.1.2 Minerva

Minerva is going to book a vacation from Schiphol to Cuba and wants to find the cheapest flight possible. This evaluation is done by Max.

3.1.3 Charlie

Charlie is going to book the cheapest holiday from Romania to Germany, then from there to France and then back to Romania. This during the months June till July. This evaluation is done by Max.

3.2 Executing the Tasks

How we have understood this task is as follows: Every evaluator (Max and Medard in this case) go over each of their persona's and performs their tasks. Every error the evaluator encounters while enacting these persona's will be aggregated underneath these scenario's.

3.2.1 Peter

Peter open de applicatie en wordt gevraagd een vertrek plaats/vliegveld in te voeren. Hij denkt even na en vult "Schiphol" in. Hierna tikt hij op het resultaat Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS). Peter wordt gevraagd een aankomst locatie/vliegveld in te voeren. Hij vult hier in "Curacao".Hierna tikt hij op het resultaat Curacao. Hij komt nu op een scherm met opties zoals retour/enkele reis, Passagiersinformatie, en kies datums. Peter tikt op datums er gebeurt niets. Hij tikt nog eens. Hierna tikt hij op een van de vertrek datum onder kies datums dit werkt wel. Peter tikt nu op 7 in de maand juni vervolgens tikt hij op gereed (rechts onder). Hij krijgt nu een berichtje dat hij een retour datum moet kiezen. Hij kiest 13 juni. En tikt hierna weer op gereed. Hij komt nu terug bij het scherm met opties. Peter tikt op Passagiersinformatie en kiest hier

2 Volwassenen en 2 kinderen jonger dan 12 jaar ook kiest hij Economyclass. En tikt hierna op toepassen. Hij komt nu terug bij het scherm met opties. Peter tikt op zoeken. Peter ziet een scherm over een prijs alarm functie. Hij probeert een venster terug te gaan maar hij kan niet bij de terug pijl. Na een poosje tikt hij op het venster en het sluit. Peter ziet nu de zoekresultaten. deze bevatten een grote hoeveelheid informatie. Zoals een rating, prijs pp, prijs voor geheel, tijden aankomst en vertrek, vliegmaatschappijen, aantal tussenstops en duur van de reis. Peter moet hier even goed naar kijken. Peter kiest de optie met de minste keren overstappen. Hij komt nu op een scherm met meer informatie over de vlucht. Hij kan duidelijk zien dat zijn vlucht in totaal 1898 kost. Hij tikt op de groene ga naar website knop. Hierna komt hij op de website van een vliegticket aanbieder met de juiste vlucht en andere instellingen al gekozen.

Na het selecteren van de bestemming datum en het aantal personen. En nadat je tickets hebt gevonden en deze geselecteerd hebt stuurd de app je naar een externe website waar je kan boeken.

3.2.2 Minerva

Minerva starts booking her trip by booking the flight with the Skyscanner app. She begins by opening the app. At the starting screen she can select where she wants to go to and where she wants to depart from. She clicks on the text field "Depart from:" and enters "amsterdam". Only one option remains: "Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS)". She clicks this option. Automatically, there is a screen opened with a text field: "Depart to:" with several options underneath it. She presses "Everywhere". This opens a new tab with a list of different countries. She scrolls through the list until she finds "Cuba". She then sees a list of Cuban Airports with prices. She selects the most top one ("Havana"). She now sees an overview of her trip. Since date is still empty, she clicks the date-box. Nothing happens. Then she clicks the box "department date". This opens up a calendar with several colored dots. She presses the "i" next to the dot's legend and see's a window appearing on the screen which shows that these dots indicate the price range for a flight at that particular date. She doesn't want all results, just the direct flights. This is not shown on the screen! However, since she doesn't want to view all flights, she deselects this option. Now the screen shows that she has selected the option of "Only direct flights". She decides to pick a date with a green dot (cheap) as a departure date (12th of May). She then decides she wants to move this date to the 21th of May, but when she clicks again, the date is selected as a return date. She tries to drag a dot, but it doesn't seem to work. She decides to click the cross in the top corner to cancel her selection.(Note: there is actually a way to do this without fully cancelling your selection, but since Minerva is a bit older, she did not understand this.) Then she reopens the date-screen and this time does select the proper departure date (21th of May). And select her return date (31th of August). She then presses the "Ready"-button in the down-right corner of the screen. She then returns to her flight overview where she can select the Passenger-information. Here she selects 2 adults and Economy-class and then presses the "Search" button. She is now shown an overview of all the different flight-times with their prices. She decides to sort by "rating" instead of "price" and scrolls through the given list to find a flight with an 8.4 rating and a cost of 735. Here, she presses "Select". Then she receives an overview of her selected

options with the option to order her flight on the Bookingswebsite that offers this flight. She selects this and books her flight.

3.2.3 Charlie

After Charlie has opened the app, he presses "Depart from" and enters: Romania. In the "Flight to" he enters: Germany. He isn't picky about his destination, so he simply selects the cheapest airport ("Frankfurt"). The app then requests a departure airport. Here he again selects the cheapest "Timisoara". Then he arrives at the overview screen. Here he only wants a single trip, so he swipes right to "one way". There he selects at passenger information, 1 adult, Economy-class. He then presses the date-box. In the calendar that then opens, he selects the 2nd of May. He then presses search. There is only one flight available so he decides to select it. He then presses "To website" to book his first ticket. Unfortunately, the app does not offer the possibility to book multiple tickets in one go, so he has to go through this process for every ticket separately.

3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Usability Heuristics

- **Visibility of system status:** There are animated loading symbols.
- **Match between system and the real world:** The language usage of the app is clear and flawless.
- **User control and freedom:** There is always an arrow (\leftarrow) or a cross ('x') available in the top left corner that allows the user to return to the previous screen.
- **Consistency and standards:** We haven't found any problems here and the language usage is not ambiguous.
- **Error prevention:** We haven't found any errors in the application.
- **Recognition rather than recall:** After selecting certain options, e.g. departure date, the app returns the user back to the overview screen.
- **Flexibility and efficiency of use:**
 - There is always a list of recently searched destinations. Which can be used to easily return to these previous search-query's.
 - The app reminds you that there is a functionality for a price-alarm when you first try to search for tickets when you open the application. There is no clear return button here, which gives the user the idea that they might have pressed a wrong button somewhere.
- **Aesthetic and minimalist design:** The color has been properly used to show price-ranges.
- **Helps users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors:** The error message when the user doesn't have an internet connection are clear.
- **Help and documentation:** If one would require help with this app, it is rather hard to find, since it's only available via the start-menu.

3.3.2 Aggegrated findings with classifications:

1. Cosmetic problem only:

- The loading symbols do not show how far a page is loaded.
- Some lists with flights can be very full which can be somewhat overwhelming.
- You cannot plan or arrange multiple tickets for different locations at the same time.
- In the planning calender, the first tap is the departure date, the second return-date and every single one after that is return-date as well and requires several taps before this can be restored. This should be changed so that you can drag the departure and return date over the calender.

2. **Small problem:** On first use, the app opens a window that reminds you that there is a functionality for a price-alarm, without a clear "back"-button. This can confuse the user that they did something wrong and works quite counter-intuitive.

3. **Larger problems:** None.

4. **Catastrophic errors:** None.

4 Conclusion

The app very well made. It contains only minor cosmetic errors and is overall very intuitive. The app is very usable for practically everyone, pretty much all age-groups should be able to use it, as long as they posses minimal smart-phone knowledge.

5 Points of improvement

We have come to these next three points of improvement:

- The app should not force the price-alarm fuction-window on you when first using the app. The fact that there is a button at which you can toggle it and receive more information about it is enough.
- Secondly, adding the calendar functionality of dragging the departure- and return-date would be a great improvement for older people, since the way it currently is, is usable, but less functional.
- Then the last, but definitely not the least point of improvement: adding the optionality of booking multiple tickets at once, as was actually needed for Charlie. Now he had to go through the effort of booking all the tickets separately each in their own separate session.